United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

24th PLENARY MEETING

Monday, 11 October 1993 at 10 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Yoo (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 *(continued)*

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. KAPUTIN (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of the people and Government of Papua New Guinea, I should like to congratulate Ambassador Insanally of Guyana on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. In so doing, I should like to recall - and to express my delegation's sincere appreciation for - the even-handed and efficient manner in which his predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, the Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, presided over the Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

His outstanding example has maintained and thereby helped to strengthen a high standard which we are confident Mr. Insanally will match. His election brings us particular pleasure because of the many important interests which Guyana shares with Papua New Guinea and the increasingly strong relations which have been developing between our two countries, mainly through cooperation in the context of multilateral organizations such as the Commonwealth, the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of Governments parties to the Lomé Convention, and the United Nations itself.

The Government of Papua New Guinea is also pleased to welcome the further progress towards the universal membership of the United Nations marked by the admission of the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Eritrea, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Monaco and Andorra. We look forward to cooperating with their Governments and delegations in advancing the objectives of the United Nations.

In welcoming the new Members, I feel bound to observe that my Government is concerned that other small States, including a number in the South Pacific, which find it difficult to afford to join and send missions to the United Nations, should be provided with the means of keeping abreast of developments and of having proper account taken of their interests, perhaps through such arrangements as a regional observer, as a number of Governments have proposed to the South Pacific Forum.

I turn now to the proposed United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation. When I addressed the General Assembly 12 months ago, I said that I had chosen "opportunity and participation" as the main theme and goal of my policy as Minister for Foreign Affairs. I also forecast that my Government would be formally proposing an initiative for the United Nations bearing the same name.

The proposal is now listed as item 151 on the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly. The initiative is, of course, important for Papua New Guinea - opportunity and participation are, in fact, among the national goals and directive principles embodied in our national Constitution. It is also important to other developing countries where increasing opportunity for, and participation by, citizens is a public issue and an official aim. It is, moreover, directly relevant to countries where previous economic arrangements are in transition to

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93-86813 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.24
1 November 1993

ENGLISH

markets. In an increasingly interdependent world, where issues and ideas often have global implications, it should be of interest and certainly deserves support worldwide.

Papua New Guinea became independent on the very same day, 16 September 1975, as the General Assembly adopted a consensus resolution - 3362 (S-VII), on "Development and international economic co-operation" - directed, in the words of its first preambular paragraph, "to accelerate the development of developing countries". The timing was, almost certainly, coincidental. But it is none the less worthy of notice because of what it suggests about the circumstances, including a continuing need to achieve the same aim on the part of countries such as Papua New Guinea both then and now.

In the early 1990s, Papua New Guinea has been enjoying an unprecedented rate of economic growth, measured, in the standard terms employed by bodies such as the World Bank, at something more than 9 per cent per year. But few would suggest that the living standards of most of our people have improved at anything like the same rate. The measure is quite seriously misleading, as many of us have known for a very long time. But so are government policies and processes of economic development that fail to pay adequate attention to questions of distribution, including who benefits and who takes part. I refer here, I should add, to distribution not only of Government services but of openings - and even more to effective access - for people to benefit by taking part in economic development.

In certain sectors of society in many countries, including my own, people - particularly those living in rural areas - are still trying to enter the cash economy for the first time. In other sectors and even more countries, people who have long been engaged in monetary transactions are trying to increase openings, access and mutually beneficial interactions. Increasing opportunity and participation is, in many respects, a universal goal. The urgency of the need to address the means of achieving it comprehensively, systematically, thoroughly and critically now arises out of concern at several features of the current international situation.

The first is the difficult and often worsening circumstances of and in many developing countries. A second is the problems being encountered in the transition to markets in countries where economic arrangements were previously State-centred. Another feature results from a tendency among economic policy-makers in widely scattered parts of the world, including developed countries and the major international financial institutions, during the 1980s to favour reducing the economic role of the State and to leave questions of access and distribution of benefits to markets.

Complicating the effects of so-called "aid fatigue" in developed countries are the increasing need and demand for aid, investment and commercial loans arising from the changes occurring in Eastern and Central Europe, the former Soviet Union, southern Africa and the Middle East. New opportunities for scarce capital and other resources are also opening up in the same and other areas. Furthermore, expensive and urgent needs will have to be met when the terrible conflicts currently raging in the former Yugoslavia, the Caucasus, parts of Africa and elsewhere are resolved and rehabilitation can get under way.

In other words, resumption or continuation of development in many parts of the world will require that more must be done with less. Opportunity, access and beneficial participation in economic development must be quite dramatically increased if living conditions are to be maintained, let alone improved.

The proposal which the Papua New Guinea Government is therefore making is for the United Nations to establish a small panel of distinguished, expert and experienced persons broadly representative of the international community to review what has already been done and to identify options to increase opportunity and participation, with particular, though not exclusive, reference to the economies of developing countries. We propose not an academic study, but one that draws on actual experience and makes recommendations for practical action. We do not have any fixed ideas about what it should say. Rather, we want it to make a close, critical examination of what has been attempted, what has been proposed and what has been - for whatever reason, or for none - overlooked.

We emphatically do not want the project to begin with doctrinaire assumptions; rather, we want it to ask questions - for example, about when and how it is best for the State to limit its involvement in the economy or to withdraw completely, and when and how the State should act to maximize opportunity and participation. Above all, we want it to investigate and to provide advice on the best way of linking opportunity, via effective access, to participation.

Thus, the panel, the project and the report ought to be multidisciplinary in approach and scope, examining critically both experiences and ideas about ways in which

legal, administrative, economic, social and other arrangements help or hinder increasing economic opportunity and participation.

While the focus should be on the particular difficulties of developing countries, the project should, we believe, look further afield. It will, in fact, have to do so if its research and findings are to stimulate the world-wide information exchange, and, above all make the practical difference which we hope will result.

In my statement to the General Assembly a year ago I described the proposed United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation as being in some respects "the economic counterpart" to the Secretary-General's most succinct and constructive report, "An Agenda for Peace." It should also be seen, I believe, as a complement to, and a necessary filling-out of, other important United Nations resolutions and documents that have been concerned with development issues more generally, such as the reports of the Pearson and Brandt Commissions, and "The Challenge to the South".

The panel and the report envisaged in our proposed draft resolution should, in addition, be viewed as complementing and helping to fill out the Brundtland Report, particularly in so far as they manage to identify options not only for maintaining increased opportunity and participation, but for continuing to increase them so as to allow living standards to go on being raised for and by future generations.

While we await publication of the Secretary-General's eagerly anticipated report outlining an agenda for development, the proposed initiative on opportunity and participation should not be seen as a rival or a duplication. The proposal ought to be seen instead for what it is intended to be, namely, a constructive start and a practical contribution to setting objectives and specifying means for development into the twenty-first century.

Like other supporters of the proposal, the Government of Papua New Guinea has been gratified by the strong and positive response with which the proposed United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation has been greeted by Governments, non-governmental organizations and international bodies in diverse parts of the world.

We have particularly appreciated the expressions of support we have received from the Government of the Assembly's President, the Chairman of the General Assembly's Second Committee, and organizations particularly concerned with advancing the common interests of developing countries, the Group of 77 and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

In our own immediate neighbourhood, we have been assured of strong, individual and collective support by members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Melanesian Spearhead Group, and the South Pacific Forum, which includes the Governments of developed countries in the region.

With assistance from the United Nations Development Programme, my Government has convened both a national and a regional Workshop, in which highly respected, variously experienced and diversely skilled persons gave their time on an honorary basis to help develop and refine the proposal. The proceedings of both Workshops are being circulated to all United Nations members.

When the proposal is debated in the Assembly on 15 November, we look to all members of the United Nations for contributions to its further development and refinement, and, of course, for their votes. As it did with the resolution (47/441) on development and international economic cooperation, adopted on Papua New Guinea's independence day, my Government hopes that the General Assembly will endorse the proposed United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation by consensus.

Believing as we do in the importance of the proposed initiative, but conscious of the severe strains currently imposed on the United Nations human and financial resources, and bearing in mind the recommendation made to all members by the Second Ministerial Meeting of the Standing Committee on Economic Cooperation of the Non-Aligned Movement, my Government has decided to make a special pledge to contribute K100,000 - the equivalent of a little more than $102,000 - to assist in realizing the proposal. While we believe that implementation of the proposal must not depend on special donations, we call upon others to do the same in accordance with their means.

With regard to conferences on development and related issues, consistent with Papua New Guinea's obvious interest in development issues generally, and in those that pertain to small island countries in particular, my Government looks forward to the first Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which is to be held in Barbados in April 1994.

We shall remain actively involved in preparations for, and the proceedings of, what we regard as a most important occasion for sharing experiences and ideas,

including both problems and hopes, with island States in our own and other regions.

For closely related reasons, we also look forward to the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994.

Having taken a close interest in the deliberations and outcome of the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June, we shall contribute as best we can to the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, scheduled for Beijing, both in 1995.

I turn to the subject of apartheid and sanctions against South Africa. Successive Governments of Papua New Guinea have always been strongly opposed to apartheid, both in principle and in practice. We have consistently applied sanctions, backed by the force of Papua New Guinea law, against those who have upheld it. Even as apartheid has been dismantled, and progress towards a democratic, multi-racial South Africa has been observed, my Government has been conscious of the special perspectives and interests of African States. We have accordingly taken the view that we would remove our sanctions against South Africa only in consultation, conducted through bodies such as the Commonwealth and the United Nations, with such States. Despite the economic interests which might have been served by allowing links between Papua New Guinea and South Africa, we have willingly paid the price our policy has required.

I have been personally moved in recent days by the addresses made by the President of the African National Congress, Mr. Nelson Mandela, before the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid as well as the Joint Assembly of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of countries and the European Community. Following the recommendations made by Mr. Mandela, the Organization of African Unity and the Commonwealth Secretariat, as well as the resolution adopted by consensus in the General Assembly on Friday 8 October, my Government will now take steps to remove legally enforced sanctions. But in doing so we remain conscious of the continuing - and unfortunate - relevance of Mr. Mandela's pointed reminder to the Joint Assembly of the ACP Group and the European Community that:

> "the white minority Government and its institutions ... should not be ... treated as though they were the representative of all the people of South Africa."

The struggle for real equality for the African citizens of South Africa is certainly not over. In some respects, it has scarcely begun. My Government believes very strongly that the achievement of a genuinely stable, democratic and multi-racial South Africa requires increasing opportunities for access to and participation in all areas of society, including the economy, by the country's African population.

My next subject is the progress towards peace in the Middle East. Successive Governments of Papua New Guinea have consistently followed a policy of supporting the right of Israel to exist within secure borders, while recognizing the Palestinian people's right to a homeland. We are accordingly both impressed and encouraged by the dramatic, bold and hopeful agreements reached by the Israeli Government and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

We commend the steps that have since been taken, including the diplomatic and material support provided by other Governments to facilitate implementation of those agreements. As our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Paias Wingti, has already announced, the Government of Papua New Guinea will do what little it can to further the process, by acknowledging the constructive role being played by the Palestine Liberation Organization and examining ways in which we might seek to strengthen relations with the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people.

I come now to the reform and revitalization of the United Nations and the recharging of its resources.

The welcome developments in southern Africa and the Middle East, particularly those related to Israel, the occupied territories and the Palestine Liberation Organization, reveal both strengths and weaknesses in the United Nations, and suggest that while there are situations in which the United Nations can play an important, even vital, role, there are also situations in which it cannot.

We must recognize that when the United Nations itself cannot, for whatever reason, be effective, then individual Governments, such as Norway's, regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, or some other body may be able to initiate or facilitate a positive outcome.

The Government of Papua New Guinea welcomes the reforms which are gradually being made to the United Nations system: in the Secretariat and other organs, and in the manner in which our deliberations are organized. We

also welcome the generally revitalized role that our Organization aspires to play in international relations. But we must remember that internal reform and reorganization are only as important as their eventual outcome.

A revitalized United Nations must not be allowed to become an instrument of sectional interests or ill-planned adventurism. In the context of the contrast between the evidently satisfactory outcome of United Nations efforts in Cambodia and the uncertainties of the situation in Somalia, my Government feels a need to sound a cautionary warning. The terrible events unfolding in the former Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the mounting toll of human death, injury and suffering resulting from conflicts in parts of the former Soviet Union reinforce my Government's reservations about aspects of the current debate over the part that the United Nations can and should play in the post-cold-war international order.

The Government of Papua New Guinea is also conscious of the selectivity and costs of United Nations peace-keeping, peace-observing and peacemaking operations, and of the need to ensure that the Organization is reformed, revitalized and re-endowed with sufficient resources to make a difference to the very basis of peace in developing countries: development itself.

My next topic is decolonization, indigenous people and natural resources. In this, the United Nations International Year of the World's Indigenous People, my Government had the rare privilege of hosting a Regional Seminar of the Special Committee of 24 on decolonization, chaired by Papua New Guinea's Permanent Representative at the United Nations. The occasion gave us an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the decolonization of New Caledonia, with special safeguards for its indigenous people, the Kanaks. The Government of Papua New Guinea is strongly opposed to any suggestion that the Matignon Accords might not be fully honoured. The same position has been adopted by our partners in the Melanesian Spearhead Group and the South Pacific Forum.

In addition to the question of New Caledonia, the Regional Seminar also focused attention on other relics of European colonialism, including French Polynesia, where Polynesian demands for independence seem to be gaining strength.

Elsewhere in the South Pacific, the negotiated settlement between the Governments of Nauru and Australia has been widely welcomed for the redress it provides for a long period of colonial exploitation of Nauru's principal land-based natural resource and the destruction of much of its natural environment.

The settlement is also arousing considerable interest as to its possible implications in other former Trust Territories and colonial dependencies. The Government of Papua New Guinea is only one of a number of interested parties which have the matter under close examination. My Government is also only one among many in welcoming, and wishing to encourage, efforts to recognize the rights and to improve the situation of other indigenous people in the South Pacific and elsewhere.

Together with our partners in the Melanesian Spearhead Group - the Governments of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu - we have signed a Declaration on Cooperation in Development of Natural Resources. One of the explicit objectives of the Declaration is to facilitate implementation of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Another objective, which has yet to be realized, is to supplement existing efforts in relation to regional fisheries by broadening and deepening cooperation between the Governments of countries in the South Pacific where other natural resources are being developed, often by outsiders.

The crisis in Papua New Guinea's North Solomons Province is an unfortunate and costly internal affair of Papua New Guinea. It continues, still unresolved, even as Government and other services are being restored. I am therefore pleased to report that my Government has recently been engaged in productive exchanges with the Government of the Solomon Islands, particularly concerning the spill-over effects of the crisis on and near the common border.

Following these exchanges, I have issued an invitation on the Government's behalf to the Joint Assembly of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States party to the Lomé Convention and the European Community to send a visiting mission to Papua New Guinea, including the North Solomons Province, to assess the situation and to recommend how it might assist in rehabilitation.

The Government has also announced its intention to work towards an All-Bougainville Leaders' Conference to try to resolve the crisis by political means. The Government of Solomon Islands has offered its cooperation in what has been, at times, a rather difficult situation. We hope to continue our dialogue over long-term measures to strengthen bilateral relations.

With respect to regional and global economic cooperation, the Government of Papua New Guinea, like most other Members of the United Nations, is concerned at the possibility that reform of the international trading system might fail as a result of the apparent intransigence of vested interests in certain developed countries during the final stages of the Uruguay Round of negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). We also do not believe that regional trading blocs can be an adequate substitute for an equitable and orderly international trading system.

The Government of Papua New Guinea does not see the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APEC) as a replacement or a rival for an updated version of GATT. But we do regard APEC as being important to our interests. More than 80 per cent in value of exports from Papua New Guinea go to the existing APEC member countries. Nearly 90 per cent of our imports come from exactly the same countries. Other aspects of Papua New Guinea's international economic relations are just as deeply enmeshed with APEC members. With encouragement from existing members, my Government has therefore applied to join APEC. We believe that it would not be right for such a body to continue without a single member from the centre of a region whose name it bears: the Pacific. We look forward to an early - and positive - response to our application.

In conclusion, I should like to say the following:

No human being can have failed to be deeply moved by, or to feel the utmost sympathy for, people affected by the disastrous earthquake which occurred in India in late September.

No one who has been following the developments consequent on the changes in the former Soviet Union can have failed to be both excited and concerned by the dramatic political and military confrontations which have been occurring in the Russian Federation. All of us must surely be concerned at reports that nuclear testing has been resumed, at the possibility that more tests might follow, and that weapons of mass destruction might grow in number, power and circulation.

In short, notwithstanding the progress made towards finding lasting solutions to some long-standing issues since the cold war ended, we continue to live in a rapidly changing, often fragile and uncertain world. Able by virtue of our membership of the United Nations at least to let our views be known on what are some of the most important and pressing issues of our time, the Government of Papua New Guinea has, therefore, chosen to give close attention to an issue of particular concern to developing countries, to explore avenues of cooperation with other States, and to propose a United Nations initiative on "Opportunity and Participation". Let me end by repeating my previous call for members' support for a proposal intended to assist in identifying what the people and Government of Papua New Guinea believe to be common interests, global problems and practical solutions.

Mr. PAPAZIAN (Armenia): Allow me to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Insanally on his election to the presidency of the forty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly. Given his talent and experience, I am confident that he will guide this session to the successful completion of the noble mission entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations. I would also like to express my appreciation and thanks to his predecessor, Mr. Ganev, for the contribution he made to accomplishing the tasks of the last session.

I wish to take this opportunity to extend my warm welcome and congratulations to the six States that have been admitted to membership of the United Nations over the past year.

I stand before the Assembly as the Foreign Minister of a small, land-locked, newly independent country of 3.5 million under complete blockade, with no energy resources, still not recovered from the devastating earthquake of 1988, flooded by hundred of thousands of refugees fleeing the conflict between Nagorny-Karabakh and Azerbaijan, and under constant provocation by Azerbaijan to be drawn into that conflict.

I am also the Foreign Minister of the only democracy in the region, an island of stability in a sea of political chaos and turmoil, a country with close to 30 registered political parties, a free press and freedom of conscience and religion, and with laws guaranteeing civil and political rights and freedoms. The Government of Armenia has also made headway towards establishing a market economy and has taken several significant steps to integrate its economy into the global economy. Armenia has moved swiftly in many areas of reform. Most agricultural land and homes and many small enterprises have already been privatized, and a tax programme, a pricing policy and legislative reform to create the legal framework for a free-market economy are effectively under way. Nevertheless, substantial work will need to be done if these advances are to contribute effectively to a successful transition.

It is encouraging to see that the United Nations has recognized that full integration of the economies in transition into the world economy will not only help those economies but also have a positive impact on world trade, economic growth and development, and is prepared to support the process of bringing about economic reform and restructuring through its special bodies and specialized agencies.

I wish to take this opportunity to convey my Government's deep gratitude to the Secretary-General for establishing the United Nations - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) interim office in Armenia. As a result of adverse natural and geopolitical circumstances, Armenia is currently in a state of economic and social crisis. We see the importance of short-term assistance in these times of great need, but at the same time are fully aware that it is the pursuit of long-term goals that will bring Armenia to function at full capacity as a member of the international community. We are convinced that the presence of United Nations specialized agencies in Armenia such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), providing technical and advisory assistance and coordination would enhance the durability of the transition that is well under way.

As we and other nations grapple with problems unique to each, the collapse of regimes and empires continues to fuel violent conflicts throughout the world. But there is an apparent change in the pattern of international conflicts. Very few wars are fought between nation States any more. The rest are struggles for self-determination turned into bloody conflict and civil war in one and the same nation State. These movements need a forum in which to lodge their claims, identify and understand their rights, negotiate with government authorities, establish just administration of their affairs, and peacefully work out realistic political and territorial arrangements for the future.

Now more than ever, it is incumbent upon the United Nations to revisit its provision of non-intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of Member States, and to define more stringently the extent of the impact of a conflict on the peace and security of other nations. Having in clear view the essential role the United Nations can play in enhancing peacemaking efforts throughout the world, we concur with recent proposals in academic circles that the United Nations transform the near-moribund Trusteeship Council into a modern clearing-house for self-determination.

Under the proposed system, a "trust territory" would be that part of a Member State voluntarily placed into trusteeship by the Government of that State for the purpose of resolving a self-determination claim under United Nations supervision without prejudicing the final status of the territory. We believe that the trusteeship system could save lives and prevent the escalation of a self-determination struggle to a devastating civil war, or worse, to a regional conflict involving other countries.

The conflict over Nagorny-Karabakh has claimed the lives of more than 10,000 people and has caused close to a million innocent people to be uprooted from their homes during the past five years. This conflict continues to threaten the security and stability of the whole region. The international community has yet to come to grips with the root cause of the conflict and devise appropriate measures to find a peaceful solution.

Armenia's position on the Nagorny-Karabakh conflict has been clear and consistent since day one. The conflict is between the people of Nagorny-Karabakh, who are striving for their self-determination, and the Azerbaijani Government, which is refusing to address the rights and security concerns of the people of Nagorny-Karabakh.

As an interested party, Armenia has advocated an unconditional cease-fire and has fully supported all the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) initiatives. The Government of Armenia sees no alternative to the peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict, than that which can be reached within the framework of the CSCE Minsk Conference.

The recent developments of the peace process are promising. Nagorny-Karabakh has at long last been recognized as a party to the conflict and direct talks between the leadership of Nagorny-Karabakh and Azerbaijani authorities, mediated by the Russian Federation, have brought about a cease-fire, which has continued to hold for more than a month now and is unprecedented in the five-year history of this bloody conflict. On 28 September during its meeting in Paris, the Minsk Group produced the "Adjusted timetable of urgent steps to implement Security Council resolutions 822 (1993) and 853 (1993)", to which Armenia has given its agreement, and is hopeful that a similar position will be adopted by the main parties to the conflict, Azerbaijan and Nagorny-Karabakh.

There is now a genuine opportunity for peace. Therefore, the convening of the Minsk Conference must not be delayed. Once peace is established, legal questions, first and foremost among which is the issue of the status of Nagorny-Karabakh, can be negotiated. The clear position of the Government of Armenia is to accept and be gratified by any solution agreed upon between Nagorny-Karabakh and Azerbaijan at the Minsk Conference.

The CSCE has an explicit security role in the new world order, consistent with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Last May, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman of the CSCE Council agreed on a framework for cooperation and coordination between the United Nations Secretariat and the CSCE, namely through the regular exchange of information in the fields of early warning, conflict prevention and the promotion of democratic values and human rights. The CSCE is also striving to obtain United Nations observer status, an initiative which Armenia fully supports.

The successful cooperation between the United Nations and the CSCE over the Nagorny-Karabakh conflict can serve as a case study in how to reconcile, practically, the conflicting claims of regionalism and universalism. Such cooperation will enhance the role of regional organizations in conflict prevention, peace-keeping and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Armenia appreciates the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" which embodies the notions of peace-keeping, peacemaking and post-conflict peace--building. History has taught us, however, that development is intrinsic to peace, and that the two can no longer be thought of as separate processes. Starvation, poverty and poor living conditions in many parts of the world loom as serious threats to stability and peace. The United Nations in its commitment to secure peace for all the Earth's inhabitants must place development high among its priorities. Indeed, it must establish economic and social development as guiding principles for the Organization's activities. Armenia fully supports the Secretary-General's initiative for an agenda for development and looks forward to contributing to this important milestone towards world peace. Armenia also gives its full support to the convocation of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen.

Today, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction poses another grave threat to both global and regional security and stability. Armenia supports the indefinite extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) beyond 1995. The United Nations should work to ensure universality and strict compliance with the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Development and human rights are also mutually inclusive values. There can be no genuine development unless systems of thought and government are based on respect for the full spectrum of the rights of individuals. It is auspicious that this year coincides with the forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The spirit of the Declaration and the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights held last June will undoubtedly deepen the understanding of the significance of human rights for stability, freedom, peace, progress and justice.

It is my Government's strong conviction that the adoption and implementation of all human rights principles by nation States will create solid ground for unity and harmony throughout a world which is being transformed and is searching for new constants.

For more effective implementation of the principles of human rights we feel it is imperative to establish the post of high commissioner for human rights and a permanent international criminal court where cases of gross violations of human rights and other crimes against humanity are submitted and prosecuted.

In 1995, the United Nations will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. In the past 50 years, the Organization has grown and has witnessed historic events, in many of which it has played a considerable role. As the Organization has entered a period in which it is being called upon to take an increasingly active guiding role in a changing world, it too must be prepared to respond effectively to these changes.

Armenia supports the call for restructuring the Security Council that has been placed before the United Nations by its Member States. Because the international community is looking to the Security Council to take a more dynamic role in the maintenance of international peace, it is necessary that the Security Council increase its membership in order that it may be able to address the issues before it in a more balanced and equitable way.

Improving the United Nations administrative performance must also become a top priority at this time. We welcome the current initiatives of the Secretary-General to streamline the Organization's administrative and management structures and procedures

to meet the demands that are now being placed upon the Organization.

As the world seems to have grown accustomed to the dreadful routine of tragic news coming from various regional hotbeds, it is inspiring to reflect on some of the more positive reverberations of the end of the cold war, which can be epitomized by the historic accord between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel signed recently. It is my privilege to salute the leaders of Israel and the PLO for taking this courageous step.

No less significant are the processes currently in motion in South Africa. Armenia joins the other Member States in supporting the negotiating process there, and believes that lifting economic sanctions at this time could encourage the people of South Africa to take up the task of building a truly free and democratic country.

In the United Nations, the end of the cold war continues to translate into ever closer cooperation between its Members. In 1992, as in 1991, despite the large volume and the diversified nature of the issues examined in the Security Council, none of the members of the Council exercised its right to veto. There is a growing harmony of interests among nations that is creating an atmosphere of trust and cooperation, which are the prerequisites for the realization of the goals envisioned by the founders of the United Nations 48 years ago in San Francisco.

Indeed, for the first time since its inception, the United Nations has been given the opportunity to become what it was intended to be: a collective security system, with a Charter providing for special forms of cooperation between sovereign States, designed to ensure peace and prosperity throughout the world.

Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji): On behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of Fiji, I congratulate Ambassador Insanally very warmly on his election as President of the Assembly. I am confident that his extensive knowledge of the United Nations system and his wide experience in the field of international relations will help guide this session to a successful conclusion.

I wish to pay a tribute to Mr. Stoyan Ganev for the excellent manner in which, as President, he conducted the business of this Assembly at its last session. I express my admiration and deep appreciation to him for a job well done. I also congratulate him for his initiative in rationalizing the work of the Assembly, and especially in rationalizing its Committee structure.

My delegation applauds the excellent work done by our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in the period since he assumed his high office. I take this opportunity to express my Government's deep appreciation for his untiring efforts in tackling the difficult and complex problems facing the world Organization.

I should also like to extend a warm welcome to the new States Members of the United Nations, the Principality of Andorra, the Czech Republic, Eritrea, the Principality of Monaco, the Slovak Republic and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. I am confident that the Organization, as it continues to strive for universality, will greatly benefit from their participation in its work.

New threats are endangering international peace and security in all corners of the world. Incipient nationalism, ethnic conflicts and excessive protectionism are threatening peace, security, and growth in trade. Thus, a heavy responsibility is placed on this Organization, which, as we all know, is the main body responsible for promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

Behind these complexities, there are also many devastating structural problems that undermine even the best efforts to achieve security and economic progress. Population growth, if left unchecked, will add 97 million people a year throughout the 1990s. Poverty, disease, famine and oppression account for the 18 million refugees and 24 million displaced persons throughout the world. The gap between the rich and the poor countries has not narrowed, but continues to grow as economic difficulties in the industrialized countries have led to increased protectionist measures against trade. Environmental degradation further compounds these problems.

In the light of these trends, we must underscore the need for better international cooperation in order to arrive at effective solutions. This, we believe, is a critical element in moving us towards the creation of an international order in which this Organization assumes greater importance as the centre of global endeavours.

The process of reviewing the role of the Organization that is currently under way is therefore very timely. We hope that the review will assist greatly in determining how the United Nations can be strengthened and, most important, how each of us as Member countries might best contribute to the new order.

The Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization, has quite rightly stressed the need for

adequate resources. We share his anxiety, and join in his call to Members to ensure that their contributions to the regular budget, as well as to the peace-keeping budget, are met on time and in full. We must make every effort to explore all possible avenues for ensuring that the Organization is put back onto a viable financial path.

My Government would like to pay a tribute to the entire United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) team for the way in which they carried out their mission in particularly difficult and dangerous conditions. Fiji is pleased to have joined other Members of the United Nations in restoring peace in Cambodia through its participation in UNTAC.

That mission has now successfully completed its major task. For the people of Cambodia, who unambiguously demonstrated their desire for peace and democracy, it is the beginning of a new era. We urge all factions to cooperate fully with the new Government by keeping alive the spirit of the Agreements signed in Paris.

The age-old problem in the Middle East has taken a new turn during the past month. This turn of events spells hope for the future in the Middle East - indeed, in the entire world and for all humanity. The desire of both Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to achieve peace for their peoples has necessitated the dismantling of differences that have existed for decades. The Washington accords should pave the way for a lasting peace.

Humanity has been touched by this historic event - the coming together of two arch-rivals for the sake of peace. We congratulate Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat - indeed, all who have laboured to bring this peace pact to reality. We must also acknowledge the contribution of the United States of America and, indeed, the United Nations and others over the years.

While positive developments are taking place in the Middle East and Cambodia, Fiji is deeply saddened at the fact that the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains unresolved. Our profound sympathy goes to all who have suffered untold misery. Such a tragedy should not be allowed to continue. We recognize that the issue is a highly complex one, but the international community must do all it can to stop the slaughter, prevent the conflict from spreading, and achieve a lasting and equitable settlement.

We are equally saddened at the events in Somalia. The success of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) in meeting the humanitarian challenge has cast a ray of hope, for which the United Nations deserves praise and, indeed, support. However, recent violence against UNOSOM II personnel must be condemned, and efforts to find ways of reducing tension between the peace-keepers and the local population must be given high priority.

Having for years witnessed the repugnant policy of apartheid in South Africa, we are pleased at the rapidity with which that policy has recently been broken down. We congratulate the leadership in South Africa - the South African Government, the African National Congress (ANC) and others - for their courage, determination and foresight in getting together and dismantling apartheid. The United Nations has played a major role in the process, but we should continue the effort until a democratic Government is elected by all - I repeat: all - the peoples of South Africa.

Fiji, like the other members of the South Pacific Forum, shares the sentiments that the Secretary-General expresses in "An Agenda for Peace", in which he highlights the positive role that regional organizations can play in the maintenance of international peace and security in their own regions. Fiji will support such regional initiatives.

On the economic front, we believe that a successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round is vital to economic growth and prosperity in all our countries. Only increased access to markets for our exports, especially in areas of comparative advantage, will enable us to increase our external purchasing power - our ability to pay for imports from the developed countries. In any event, we look forward to a genuinely equitable outcome that will include a substantial and liberalizing effect on trade in agricultural products.

Slow progress in finalizing the Round has led to the formation and strengthening of regional trading blocs. Many new initiatives now being put in place are defensive responses to existing regional trading arrangements. These have the potential to weaken the multilateral character of the trading system, as many of them do not comply with the spirit and the provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Developing countries, it has been estimated, lose about $100 billion a year in export revenues as a result of market barriers in industrialized countries - about twice the official development assistance that the industrialized countries provide. Furthermore, it is most ironic that

taxpayers in the industrialized countries pay both for aid and for imports that are more costly as a result of trade barriers, while the poorest developing countries lose more in trade than they gain in aid. For these reasons alone, further progress in trade liberalization, through success in the Uruguay Round, is very urgent, and we join other delegations in stressing that no effort should be spared in bringing the Round to a successful conclusion.

Of the 42 resolutions on disarmament issues adopted by the Assembly at its last session, 15 deal with various ways of controlling nuclear arms, the management of nuclear waste, the banning of nuclear tests and the elimination of nuclear weapons. In this regard, we welcome the decisions by nuclear Powers to extend their testing moratorium, and we regret very much that this moratorium has just been breached. We call on all nuclear Powers to continue to honour the moratorium. In August this year, the South Pacific Forum welcomed the commitment by the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to the early negotiation of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We take this opportunity to urge all the nuclear-weapon States to participate actively in the negotiations and to adopt the Treaty as soon as possible.

The signing of the chemical-weapons Convention in Paris early this year was a major step forward in the process of eliminating weapons of mass destruction. As a demonstration of its commitment to that end, Fiji has not only signed the Convention but also ratified it - the first country to do so.

In the South Pacific Forum, member Governments, including the Government of Fiji, highlighted the importance of an enhanced international regime to deal with possible transboundary damage arising from peaceful nuclear activity, and noted the absence of effective international rules for nuclear liability. Members of the Forum have agreed to participate in the ongoing deliberations of the Standing Committee on Nuclear Liability convened by the International Atomic Energy Agency and to support the establishment of a comprehensive international legal regime dealing with liability for nuclear damage and reflecting fully the principle that the polluter should pay.

Fiji welcomes the continuing growth in the number of parties to the non-proliferation Treaty and will support indefinite extension of the Treaty.

In support of international peace and security, we have consistently contributed to many peace-keeping operations over the years. Since our first participation in peace-keeping operations in 1978, Fiji has been involved in seven. We pay tribute to the men and women currently engaged in United Nations peace-keeping operations around the world. Peace-keepers are being increasingly asked to serve in high-risk environments. That these are high-risk operations is tragically borne out by the fact that hundreds of peace-keepers have made the supreme sacrifice in their service to humanity.

The time is right for the issue of the safety and security of peace-keeping personnel to be addressed in a more systematic, comprehensive and practical manner, and we support the notion wholeheartedly. The related question of responsibility for attacks on United Nations and associated personnel, and measures to ensure that those responsible for such attacks are brought to justice, is also now an important one to address. We shall fully support any effort in that direction.

Apart from the large increase in the number of peace-keeping operations, many important changes are taking place in the nature of peace-keeping. The eight peace-keeping operations undertaken since the end of the cold war have involved not only traditional military activities but also a wide range of humanitarian and civilian activities. The constantly changing nature of the various crises means that we must increasingly be more innovative in designing peace-keeping operations, as they are normally very costly.

As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, the 17 peace-keeping operations are now costing the Organization some $2.8 billion annually. To some extent, the answer to the increasing costs lies in more preventive diplomacy aimed at defusing potential conflicts. Moreover, the involvement of Member States, either on an individual basis or through regional organizations, in peace-building and peace-keeping activities appears to be another effective way of preventing military clashes. In this regard, the Secretary-General has placed before us several suggestions which, we believe, deserve our serious consideration and action.

I now wish to turn briefly to a subject that has been the focus of a great deal of attention, especially during the last three years; that is, the subject of sustainable development. Several resolutions adopted by the Assembly on following up the important decisions taken at Rio about 15 months ago are now being implemented at various levels. It is most encouraging that we now have 162 countries that have signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change, and 26 countries that have ratified it.

Fiji ratified the Convention in February this year, and hopes that the required number of ratifications, 50, will soon be achieved, so that the Convention can enter into force. As global warming and a rise in sea level are amongst the most serious threats to the Pacific region and to the survival of some small island States, Fiji reaffirms its support for the Convention and takes this opportunity to urge all States to sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

Fiji has been active in the area of environmental management and protection. The Rio Conference has, however, changed the way in which many of us now view environment and development issues. More than ever before, we are committed to the idea that the development of our economy and society must not come at the expense of our environment. To the contrary: development and environmental protection are complementary.

My Government is committed to sound environmental management and protection as an integral part of our decision-making process. A national environment strategy has now been adopted by the Government, and will form the basis for further work on environmental issues in Fiji.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development has recognized in the Agenda 21 plan of action for sustainable development, that small island developing countries are a special case for sustainable development. Small island countries supporting small communities are ecologically fragile and vulnerable; because of our small size, our resources are limited, and because of our geographic dispersion and isolation from markets, we are placed at a disadvantage economically and have limited economies of scale.

Our dependence on the ocean and our coastal environments is also very significant. They are not only of strategic importance to us; they also constitute a valuable development resource.

It was in this context that, last year, we welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/189 calling for a Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be convened in April 1994. We appreciate the very important work that has been put into the organizational session and the preparatory meetings, convened early this year. We hope that the Conference will be successful and will help us not only to identify the most critical issues involved but also to agree on precise and practical solutions for overcoming our vulnerabilities. We urge all member countries to participate in this Conference and to assist in finding solutions to problems that have buffeted small island countries for a very long time.

The small island States contain a wealth of biological diversity of global significance - our rich marine ecosystems rivalling the better-known tropical rain forests in their importance to life on this planet and in their potential for new knowledge and new products, including medicines. An international cooperative approach to conserving our coastal and marine resources would benefit not just the island States but the world as a whole.

The international community met in July this year and examined ways and means of conserving and managing straddling and highly migratory fish stocks. We believe that good progress was made at this meeting in identifying the problems that exist and areas in which fisheries cooperation between States could be improved.

There are still, however, several important tasks remaining that need to be completed before the next session of the Assembly. Fiji, therefore, fully supports the convening of two further sessions next year to enable the Conference to reach agreement on all issues relating to the conservation and management of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks.

Fiji was the first country to ratify the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We are therefore gratified that the Convention is soon to achieve the 60 ratifications required for its entry into force. We continue to support all efforts towards universal participation in this very important Convention, which is to govern over 70 per cent of the Earth's surface. In this regard, we are pleased that all States - including now the United States - are engaged in the ongoing dialogue to resolve the outstanding problems and thereby pave the way towards universality for the Convention.

Over the next few years, the Organization will be focusing its attention and energies on the convening of several very important international conferences. While these conferences will be important in themselves, as they will bring together the world community, they will not only discuss issues that are assigned to them but will also provide opportunities to arrive by consensus at solutions to many of the critical problems facing the world today.

The World Summit on Social Development planned for 1995 will help to strengthen social development in all countries by giving political impetus, at the highest level, to the promotion of social policies. The three core issues that have been established for the Summit - the alleviation

of poverty, the growth of employment, and the enhancement of social integration, especially of disadvantaged groups - are all essential. Above all, the Summit should, in our view, foster greater understanding of the importance of social development and, particularly, its relationship with economic development and protection of the environment.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, to be convened in Beijing in 1995, will, we hope, be action--oriented and provide an opportunity to review past activities and, most important, set new priorities. For its part, my Government is fully committed to strengthening the role of women in economic and social development and has taken several steps to integrate women into the mainstream of national development. Towards this end, plans have been formulated and are being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Culture, other sectoral ministries and non-governmental organizations. Women constitute more than 50 per cent of Fiji's population, which makes them valuable partners in the growth and development of our country and the uplifting of our people.

We are, at the same time, also turning our attention to the situation and needs of children in Fiji as we continue to participate actively in Universal Children's Day. Fiji has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and has signed the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s. We have also undertaken a detailed study of the situation of children in Fiji and have identified areas which require our attention. We are now in the process of following up the recommendations of this study.

Fiji, as a multiracial and multicultural community, attaches great significance to family values and family traditions. We therefore welcome and appreciate the decision by the United Nations to observe 1994 as the International Year of the Family. My Government has already formed a national committee, comprising representatives from both government and non-governmental sectors, to make preparations for observance of the International Year of the Family in a meaningful and practical way.

The International Year of the World's Indigenous People will soon be coming to a close. With the observance of the International Year the attention of the United Nations has for the first time been focused directly and solely on indigenous peoples. Next year, the Commission on Human Rights will assess the activities of the Year. It is important that the voices of indigenous peoples should continue to be heard, and their right to self-determination, their right to rebuild their communities in dignity with freedom of choice, must continue to receive the full support of the United Nations.

The draft text of a declaration on indigenous peoples' rights, first proposed in 1985, received the approval of the Working Group last July. Fiji welcomes the Working Group's decision as an important step towards a much-needed international instrument on indigenous peoples' rights.

The International Year of the World's Indigenous People, should not, we believe, be treated as an isolated event, but as the beginning of a long-term policy of supporting, protecting and learning from the world's indigenous peoples. For our part, we have set aside a special day in our nation's calendar to commemorate this event, coinciding with the birthday of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, one of the great leaders of the indigenous people of Fiji.

The indigenous people now comprise the majority of Fiji's population but my Government recognizes the need and will do its utmost to ensure unity, order, equity and security for all the people of Fiji, so that we can all live in peace and harmony. We will continue to ensure that harmonious relationships are established and maintained both among our own people at home and with other people abroad.

With reference to my own region, the South Pacific, we are following very closely the current progress in New Caledonia towards the self-determination of that territory. We hope that the developments, as envisaged under the Matignon and Oudinot accords, will continue so that the indigenous Kanak population will be fully prepared to take part in the referendum in 1998 and to decide on the future political status of their country.

Speaking at the session of the General Assembly last year, on 8 October, Fiji's Prime Minister, Major General Sitiveni Rabuka, promised to initiate a review of the 1990 Constitution of Fiji, which has been the subject of controversy both locally and abroad. I am pleased to say that my Government has already set in train the process for the review of the Constitution, as promised. The review is to consider how the provisions of the Constitution can be improved upon to reflect fully the concerns and interests of Fiji's multi-ethnic and multicultural society.

This Organization, now almost 50 years old, has stood the test of time but, like other institutions, it must also

adjust to change. We must continue to examine ways of making it a forum for both discussion and action on the important social, economic and political issues facing the world community as they evolve.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm my country's commitment to the United Nations and to the spirit of international cooperation and solidarity that it embodies. My country, and its people, joins with other nations to do its utmost to seek world peace, stability and sustainable development for all. We firmly believe that the United Nations remains the only hope for mankind to achieve peace and prosperity. It is through the combined efforts of all Member States, large and small, that we can develop a global environment which is just and equitable and which reflects the legitimate needs and interests of all peoples.

Miss CHIEPE (Botswana): Botswana and Guyana have, since their attainment of independence, both in 1966, been the closest of friends. That is why we have welcomed the election of Ambassador Insanally of Guyana to the presidency of the forty-eighth session with so much warmth and anticipation. I say "anticipation" because we are confident that he has the requisite experience, expertise and diplomatic finesse to make a good and productive President for this most hopeful session of the Organization.

Our gratitude goes to the outgoing President of the forty-seventh session, the Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, who gave the best account of his skills in the service of the Assembly last year.

The new Members who have just joined the United Nations are most welcome in our midst. We assure them of our fellowship and readiness to cooperate with them in the service of peace here at the United Nations.

We also wish to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on the creative dynamism he has injected into the work of the United Nations. We know his work has not been easy. But under his able leadership the United Nations has indeed demonstrated its capacity to serve as a reliable instrument of impartial management of international conflicts. Increasingly, we are seeing the fulfilment of the ideas contained in what I think was the most forward-looking report ever produced by a Secretary-General of this Organization, "An Agenda for Peace".

Mr. Ansari (India), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We commend the efforts the Secretary-General has undertaken so far to enhance the Organization's effectiveness. Botswana understands the concerns raised by the Secretary-General when he addressed the Fifth Committee in August. Many demands and problems foisted on the United Nations have put a lot of strain on its coffers. Resources made available by Member States are far from enough to meet these demands. Thus, the Organization is facing a financial crisis of unprecedented magnitude. The biggest problem, as explained by the Secretary-General, is the failure of some Member States to fulfil their financial obligations by paying the assessed contribution for both the regular budget and peace-keeping missions. Member States must heed the Secretary-General's call and fulfil their Charter obligations by paying their contributions in full and on time.

At the same time, it would be remiss of me not to emphasize the need and importance of transparency and accountability in the use of United Nations funds. Of late, we have heard of many irregularities in the administration of this Organization's funds, in particular funds for peace-keeping missions. A number of proposals have been put forward by the various Member States for a review of the rules and regulations governing United Nations finances. The time has come to set up a respectable mechanism to undertake this urgent task.

Although the cold war is no more and old ideological empires have unravelled, the euphoria of triumphalism has been short-lived. There is turmoil almost everywhere as age-old nationalisms that have for so long been suppressed explode with a vengeance that knows no limit. True to character, the twentieth century will not, so it seems, fade away peacefully.

The post-cold-war era and the celebrated onset of a new world order have thus not brought peace to our world, but more bloodshed, instability and insecurity in many places. Consequently, there has been a rapid expansion of United Nations peace-keeping operations - far beyond the capacity of the Organization's resources to manage. There is neither the manpower nor the financial wherewithal for the United Nations to be everywhere in the magnitude of presence that is so often requested.

There is, nevertheless, every reason for us to be satisfied with the valiant efforts which the Secretary-General and his staff have exerted to ensure that the many fires of civil war that have become such dominant features of the so-called new world order do not engulf us all. The United Nations has shown that, given the wherewithal, it can live up to what we expect of it in the realm of peacemaking and peace-keeping. Cambodia has just been saved from self-destruction. Imagine what Somalia could

have become had the United States and the United Nations not intervened to safeguard the delivery of the massive humanitarian assistance which the international community has poured into the famished country. Even in the Balkans, where the most brutal and senseless civil war imaginable is in progress, particularly in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina - a civil war that for a year and a half has been defying every solution attempted - the United Nations has played a mitigating humanitarian role under the most difficult of operational circumstances.

On Somalia, Botswana stands firm in its support for the United Nations mission of mercy in that devastated country. We condemn in the strongest terms the continued attack on United Nations peace-keeping forces even as we deeply regret the loss of innocent Somali lives. We cannot condone the massive loss of civilian lives in Mogadishu, though at the same time we need to be extremely circumspect in apportioning blame to one side of the conflict or the other. An international effort to save a people is in serious jeopardy. An attack on United Nations peace-keeping forces must never be taken lightly, for it is fraught with very serious implications. The horrendous spectacle of the corpse of a United Nations peace-keeper being dragged like a garbage bag on the streets of Mogadishu deserves all the opprobrium civilized humanity can heap on such a callous act of inhumanity. The international community must not flinch in the face of the acts of those in Mogadishu who are bent on thwarting the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation in Somalia.

In many ways, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) has been a success. Botswana is proud to have made a contribution to UNOSOM, however modest.

The terrible civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a monumental outrage that must shame us all as human beings. A world that is able to tolerate scenes of tiny innocent children being torn to pieces or maimed by shrapnel and bullets - innocent and helpless victims of a war that makes sense only to its perpetrators - is a world without a conscience. The international community must devise more creative ways and means of dealing effectively with that savage conflict.

To turn to our own continent, in Mozambique there is an encouraging movement towards peace and tranquility. The situation there has stabilized enough to give us more hope than ever before that the war-ravaged sister country will soon enjoy the beginnings of economic recovery and national reconciliation and healing. Humanitarian relief is now able to reach the famine-stricken. The United Nations peace-keeping force, among which is our own contingent, is progressively moving towards full deployment and the accomplishment of its mandate. It is hoped that the many cease-fire violations thus far recorded will not sabotage the peace process.

The survival of the State and nation of Angola is in very serious jeopardy as the senseless civil war that has been raging there since the mid-1970s has worsened and assumed the dimensions of an unstoppable conflagration. All the efforts of the Security Council to find a lasting solution to the civil war have come to naught as a result of Mr. Savimbi's stubborn refusal to negotiate a peaceful end to the conflict. Unfortunately, in the face of this stubbornness on the part of Mr. Savimbi, the world seems utterly incapable of doing anything more than calling continuously for peaceful negotiations - a call that is continuously scorned.

The international community must do more to save Angola. A terrible crime against humanity is being perpetrated against the Angolan people. We take note of the recent announcement by UNITA that it is ready to accept the Bicesse Accords and the results of the 1992 elections. The Government has in principle agreed to the resumption of peace talks. We hope that this time the peace talks, if they take place, will produce the solution we have been desperately waiting for.

In South Africa, the horizon of change is more promising than ever before. Negotiations for a new South Africa have been torturously slow and painful, but they have, in a stunning reversal of fortune, produced the first tangible evidence of the onset of real and meaningful change. The legislative structures that are to underpin the transition to the establishment of a democratic Government in the first half of next year are in place. Four bills - namely, those regarding the Independent Election Commission, the Independent Media Commission, the Independent Broadcasting Authority and the Transitional Executive Council - have been adopted by the Negotiating Council and will soon be enacted into law, having been passed by the South African Parliament.

Once the transitional legislative package has been completed with the adoption of the interim constitution and the constitutional principles and fundamental rights at present under negotiation, the transition will officially begin with the installation of the Transitional Executive Council. To show the great promise that the situation in South Africa holds today, I can do no better than quote Mr. Nelson Mandela's momentous speech of 24 September

to the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid. He said,

> "The countdown to democracy has begun. The date for the demise of the white minority regime has been determined, agreed and set".

In its statement of 29 September 1993 the Ad Hoc Committee of the Organization of African Unity on Southern Africa concurred that enough progress had been made in the peace process in South Africa to warrant the lifting of economic sanctions. This was a momentous decision taken by Africa in the ardent belief and hope that we are truly approaching a historic watershed in the blood-stained history of southern Africa: the end at last of the long nightmare of apartheid. However, as Mr. Mandela and the Secretary General of the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania, Mr. Benny Alexander, have conceded, freedom is not yet there. With all the horrific violence now ravaging the KwaZulu countryside and the East Rand townships, in the back yard of the World Trade Centre in Johannesburg, where the negotiations are taking place, the process does not lack enemies or detractors. There is also the unfortunate boycott of the negotiation process by some parties, whose implications it is impossible to ascertain. Nevertheless, the people of South Africa, more than ever before, will need and, indeed, deserve our determined companionship as they walk the last and, possibly, the most difficult mile in their journey to the new South Africa.

Regrettably, progress, if any, has been very slow in the implementation of the United Nations plan on Western Sahara. We urge the Secretary-General to continue to spare no effort to ensure that the referendum is held so that the people of Western Sahara can at long last decide their future.

Botswana is encouraged by the readiness of all parties to the Liberian conflict to honour their commitments to the Yamoussoukro Accords and other subsequent peace plans. We are anxious to see the Accords implemented peacefully and in full. The Secretary- General, in his last report on the subject (S/26422), notes that a successful implementation of the Accords would require sufficient resources. We appeal to all Member States to be generous in their contributions to the trust fund set up for this purpose.

It is with a sigh of relief that we welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 872 (1993) on Rwanda. We appeal to all the parties to the conflict in Rwanda to cooperate fully with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in ensuring that that war-torn East African sister country does not revert to the carnage that has often threatened its very existence.

We celebrate the triumph of the democratic process in the south-eastern Asian nation of Cambodia. The shroud of misery and death that for many years eclipsed Cambodia has, hopefully, now been lifted, and lifted forever. We congratulate the United Nations and the Cambodians on a job well done. 89.56 per cent of Cambodian voters, undaunted by violence and threats of violence, have spoken loud and clear that they want peace and reconciliation.

In the Middle East, the homeland of the Bible and its miracles, we have recently witnessed a miraculous *rapprochement* between the Jewish people of Israel and the Palestinian people. The foundations of peace in the area have been laid, and no effort should be spared to build on them. No effort should be spared in making the peace process only just begun a just, comprehensive and lasting one. Given the desperate conditions in the occupied territories, we, the international community, have a duty to support and nurture the peace process by contributing generously to the economic reconstruction of the area to enable the Palestinians to taste the fruits of peace.

We cherish the hope that the sudden improvement of prospects for peace in the Middle East will have a catalytic and propelling effect on the quest for a workable formula for the reunification of the island Republic of Cyprus. So long as the island remains divided, it will remain a source of conflict and instability in the area.

So it is with Korea. Botswana hopes the divided peninsula will soon realize that it has become fashionable in this post-cold-war era for age-old problems suddenly to become amenable to solution. Change - peaceful change - through negotiation is the imperative of our time.

In Central America, after many years of conflict, El Salvador is finally at peace. We hope that the proven capacity and efficacy of the United Nations in the field of election-monitoring and supervision will again be put to good use in El Salvador's March 1994 election.

In Haiti, we look forward to the imminent restoration of the presidency of Father Aristide. The success of the United Nations and the Organization of American States in shaping the agreement deserves our commendation.

Botswana, a country whose respect for human rights is second to none, supports fully the creation of a post of

commissioner of human rights. We have no human rights abuses to hide, nor do we fear criticism - constructive criticism, that is - should the international community find some aspect of our domestic policy or policies to be incompatible with the enjoyment of human rights by our citizens. This is not an invitation to interference in our internal affairs. We have always maintained that no nation has the right to violate the basic human rights of its citizens while using Article 2 (7) of the Charter as an argument against intervention by the international community.

Recent reports have revealed that the United Nations is spending roughly three times as much on peace-keeping and peacemaking as on development assistance. Problems of development, as should be clear to everybody, constitute the underlying cause of world conflicts, and for the United Nations to be effective in the maintenance of international peace, more energy and resources have to be expended on development activities.

Of particular concern are the downward trend in Africa's commodity prices, the debt burden and the shrinking aid flow. In addition, many African countries, including my own, have had to cope with the serious effects of drought and famine. The civil strife which many African countries have had to cope with have also had a crippling effect on economic activity through damage to infrastructure.

In order for an effective process of development to get under way in Africa the international community needs to establish a more open trading system giving access to, and adequate compensation for, commodities produced in Africa. For the past several years the market share for African goods has experienced a dramatic decline. Botswana appeals for a speedy conclusion of the current Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, which we believe will strengthen Africa's trading capacity and allow unrestricted access of our commodities to the world markets.

The debt burden continues to be a major obstacle to African economic growth and development. Clearly, necessary measures have not been taken to attend to this compounding problem. The time has come for the donor community and the multilateral financial institutions to heed Africa's call to reduce or totally cancel the debt stock.

We live in exciting times, exciting in both positive and negative ways. We have been fortunate to wake up from the long nightmare of the cold war and bear witness to the birth of a new world, however imperfect. The birth of any new epoch has never been easy or free of pain. The membership of the Organization has multiplied with the rapid emergence of new nations, whose aspirations for self-determination had for so long been frustrated.

The import of this most welcome development is, of course, not simply that we are close to universality but, also, that the problems facing the Organization have multiplied. Thankfully, our rejuvenated United Nations seems to have borne this increased load of responsibilities with a great deal of enthusiasm. Botswana renews its faith in this rejuvenated United Nations and in its time-tested Charter.

Mr. TAVERAS GUZMAN (Dominican Republic) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The delegation of the Dominican Republic takes great pleasure in extending its warmest congratulations to Mr. Samuel Insanally on his well-merited election to preside over the General Assembly at this forty-eighth session. A man from our America - and, more specifically, from the Caribbean region, where both of our countries are located - he has the required abilities and experience successfully to guide our work at this session, which must confront and deal with the major challenges facing the international community, namely, the achievement of peace and the economic and social development of our nations.

We also wish to express our appreciation to the outgoing President, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, for the wisdom with which he led our deliberations at the previous session.

I should also like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his commitment and for his efforts to carry out the principles and purposes of the Organization's Charter.

Today, in our America, we are witnessing the beginnings of a negotiated solution to conflict, and we are pleased that in Central America, and particularly in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala, the disputes that have disturbed the peace and hindered the development of our peoples are now being resolved at the negotiating table. In our Island of Hispaniola, imperial and colonial rivalry divided the population into two peoples who, over the course of time, established two independent States - the Dominican Republic, which we represent here, and the Republic of Haiti. The efforts being made by the Haitian people and their leaders, with international assistance in the form of negotiations under the aegis of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, are now

beginning to bear fruit and will, we trust, restore normalcy to that fraternal country with the re-establishment of constitutional order.

In that connection our delegation reiterates its appeal to the international community to lend real assistance to stabilize the democratic regime and to ensure the economic reconstruction of Haiti - assistance and cooperation adequate to meet the needs of peace and employment. The Dominican Republic, in so far as it is able, remains ready to continue to cooperate with this fraternal people to lighten the heavy burden of its current problems.

In this respect, we are pleased to report that the Prime Minister of the Haitian Government, Mr. Robert Malval, recently made an official visit to the Dominican Republic, with a view to fully normalizing relations between the Dominican and Haitian peoples and establishing the full spectrum of relations between the two countries, in their mutual interest. I am happy to say that the Haitian Prime Minister was given a very warm welcome by the President of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Joaquín Balaguer, who has always been interested in finding a solution to our brother country's political conflict and especially in alleviating the serious economic situation there. As a result of the meeting, the two statesmen reached an agreement, subsequently formalized, that will ensure the speedy and constructive normalization of relations, with real reciprocal cooperation, between our two States.

There is no more appropriate forum than this for me, on behalf of my country and Government, to appeal again for massive aid from the most developed nations of the Earth to that afflicted and impoverished neighbouring brother country.

Since the conquest and colonization of America, the Dominican Republic has defended human rights. It was in our island, Hispaniola, that a loud voice was first raised on behalf of the rights of the indigenous inhabitants of our American lands - the voice of Brother Antón de Montesinos, in his famous Advent sermon. Faithful to that first call for the redemption of our continent, our Government honours this historical tradition, which is fully valid today in our country's official and private practice. It has been working on instruments - which might eventually become international in nature - that will contribute to giving juridical force to that tradition.

Our country has advocated the universality of human rights. We believe that neither geographical, economic, social, religious nor cultural differences can ever be used as a pretext for showing contempt for human rights.

The Dominican delegation believes that, because of the increase in the membership of the United Nations - currently at 184 countries - there should be a more equitable representation in the Security Council, while at the same time we continue to abide by the provisions of paragraph 1 of Article 23 of the United Nations Charter. Now that the bipolarity of the past has disappeared and the use and abuse of the veto are fading, the Council should become more representative of the new international reality. This should be done in broad consultations, after due reflection and with account taken of the need for equity, so that the Council can become more representative without its effectiveness being in any way mitigated or weakened. Rather, its authority and responsibility will be enhanced so that it can respond effectively to any crisis with which the international community might be confronted, as the Council has done recently. In this regard, we consider that it would be practical and feasible to give the Council greater flexibility in meeting the just aspirations of nations, such as the Republic of China, that wish to become Members of the United Nations and cooperate in carrying out its principles.

I would now like to express our views on developments in the international situation, particularly on conflicts that, in one way or another, have been affecting international peace.

I shall refer first to the Central American crisis, which, happily, today is on the road to a definitive solution because of the positive evolution, under the auspices of the United Nations, of the El Salvador peace agreements, and the recent return to democracy in Guatemala, which augurs well for the institutionalization of peace and prosperity in that region.

Next, we would like to refer to one of the most complex and difficult conflicts facing the international community today - that is, the existence of extreme nationalism, which in some cases has led to fratricidal wars and the annihilation of large groups of people because of racial and cultural hatred. This has happened in the former Yugoslavia, where even now, despite the efforts of the United Nations and intensive diplomatic activity, blood is still being shed between brother peoples that until recently lived together under one flag. Our Government wishes to see a swift solution to the situation in the former Yugoslavia and reiterates its support for measures taken by the Security Council, in particular the establishment of an international war tribunal to pass judgement on crimes against humanity committed in some areas of the conflict.

We would especially like to point to one positive development that represents perhaps our best hope for peace today: the transitional agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Government of the State of Israel. The long-standing conflict in the Middle East engendered dangerous tension that has kept the entire world in suspense and has been regarded as the potential source of a future conflagration of incalculable destructiveness.

In connection with the development to which I have just referred - the agreement between the Palestinians and the State of Israel - it might be time to defer consideration of or remove the items on that conflict that have long appeared on the General Assembly's agenda. With this reciprocal exchange of olive branches of peace, we can see the promise of harmony between peoples that have been living in such uneasy proximity.

We must recognize how the persistent diplomacy of the United States contributed to securing the results that have been achieved. The United States considered the situation with a view to deciding what was possible in relations between the Arab and Jewish peoples. The agreement culminated in the signing at the White House in Washington. In our opinion, that demonstrated unequivocally and very clearly to international public opinion the sincerity of the parties, who were fully aware of the extreme importance of the commitments into which they were entering.

We must constantly stress the importance of the environment. After economic crisis and the imbalance between North and South, the major challenge facing mankind is the environmental crisis. The gradual destruction of ecosystems and the deteriorating quality of life of human beings are unavoidable aspects of everyday existence for the peoples of the world. Thus, it is essential that the course of events be changed. The political will of Governments and of all those who participate in organized civilian society will be necessary to our taking up this great challenge, which will involve commitment on the part of everyone - a commitment from all mankind.

In that connection, the Dominican Republic supports the general outline of the Plan of Action that was adopted at the summit Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Here we have a valuable instrument for political programming and regional cooperation to protect the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The latter part of the twentieth century has witnessed major changes in world political affairs, ranging from the end of the cold war to democratization in the countries of Eastern Europe. Despite this ideological thaw, however, we still have arms trafficking and nuclear arsenals and, therefore, a serious threat to peace.

Let me refer once again to the situation in the Korean peninsula and mention specifically North Korea, which is continuing its nuclear research and investing enormous resources in this undertaking. Let us invite the Government of North Korea to become a party to the universal agreements on the control of nuclear weapons. Let us invite it to cooperate transparently and effectively with the International Atomic Energy Agency in that body's important task of inspecting and monitoring nuclear facilities. Willingness to do so would constitute evidence of that Government's respect for its own nation and of its concern for the future of its people and of all mankind.

We support United Nations measures to put an end to arms trafficking. We support efforts to ensure transparency in military expenditures so that military activity may be made more predictable, and peace and international security, at the regional and world levels, strengthened.

Let me now turn to two important issues that are still on the agenda of this Assembly.

May I, first, draw the attention of the international community, as represented here, to the positive developments in the area of drug trafficking, which are due to the success of many measures aimed at combating and eradicating what has for too long been one of the most ominous scourges of mankind. None the less, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that measures are implemented both internally and internationally and result from coordinated policies of all the nations represented here today. The Dominican Republic has just become a party to the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the 1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, bringing itself up to date on international legislation in order the better to play its role in collaborating with other States and agencies.

The other issue to which I wish to refer is the economic crisis affecting most countries of the world. Today, the phenomenon of globalization of the economy and integration of regional blocs is typical of the international situation, which is evolving so rapidly that countries such as mine can no longer put off negotiations

to determine their participation in multilateral free-trade agreements, customs unions or regional markets.

In this connection, the international activities of the Dominican Republic focus on the economic programmes of countries in our region and regional organizations that can help in our development and in our enjoyment of technical and financial cooperation.

The implementation of appropriate domestic policies by our Government will ensure that trade and investment will become the ideal means to strengthen bilateral relations, underpinned, of course, by the unilateral granting of trade benefits under the Caribbean Basin Initiative and by the opening up of our market under the Americas Initiative.

In the new international order, another of the major challenges that the Dominican Republic must face is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its possible implications; we understand that NAFTA, as a theoretical possible outcome, would imply an effort towards the complete liberalization of trade throughout the hemisphere.

I should like to emphasize the Dominican Republic's strong support for holding a World Summit for Social Development to take up matters relating to the social situation in the world, particularly that of women, young people, the elderly, the handicapped and families. The Summit will have to deliver a clear undertaking for common policies to defend and protect these important segments of the world's population collectively, and we hope that many of our countries will take measures to extend coverage and protection for these social sectors, especially for children and the elderly.

We should like to draw to members' attention a subject of serious concern to my Government and country, and that has complex and serious ramifications that will be brought before the appropriate forums during the forty-eighth General Assembly session. This is the Secretary-General's proposal to merge the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Theoretically, the General Assembly will study this proposal in November.

My Government attaches the greatest importance to this decision, and requests this world forum to give it its closest attention in order to avoid committing a grave injustice by taking hasty action or the like.

INSTRAW was conceived at the First World Conference on Women, held in Mexico City in 1975, and was established as the result of a series of resolutions, including, we should like to recall, Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/11 of 9 May 1979. This resolution specified clearly that the permanent headquarters of the Institute was to be my country, the Dominican Republic, a developing country.

Moreover, my Government gave the United Nations the building that is being used as the Institute's headquarters. Not only that, it had to make significant investments in terms of money and other resources in order to overhaul the building to bring it up to the specifications required by the Organization.

We request the Secretary-General to postpone any action leading to merger between INSTRAW and UNIFEM until such time as the General Assembly considers his proposal and comes to its own conclusions on the matter.

Also, it would seem that there is an attempt being made to ignore, unilaterally, the Agreement between the United Nations and the host Government that is the legal framework within which INSTRAW operates. My Government regards this as a serious - an extremely serious - impropriety, and reserves the right to use all relevant legal means to assert its legitimate rights.

Finally, the delegation I lead calls upon the consciences of all nations and on all those leaders who bear upon their shoulders responsibility for the destiny of their countries and the world, for peace, common sense and mutual respect to prevail over violence and for there to be cooperation and solidarity between peoples; for these are the supreme purposes of this Organization.

Mr. ARSALA (Afghanistan): Permit me, first of all, to congratulate Ambassador Insanally on his unanimous election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. I am confident that, under his dynamic and wise leadership, coupled with the support of that able and consummate diplomat, His Excellency Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the deliberations of this Assembly will produce constructive and fruitful results in meeting some of the major challenges our world is facing at this time and in laying a sound foundation for international relations in the foreseeable future.

Our appreciation is also extended to His Excellency Stoyan Ganev, the President of the General Assembly at its

forty-seventh session, for his successful conduct of that session of the Assembly.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Member States that have joined us. I expect that their participation at this session will contribute significantly to international peace and cooperation.

The world has witnessed phenomenal changes within the last two or three years. With the collapse of Soviet communism, many new independent States have emerged, and several countries whose citizens lived unwillingly behind the Iron Curtain for almost half a century have rejoined the free world. The bipolar world has disappeared and the cold war has practically ended. These great changes provide an opportunity for us to reduce international tensions, to attain true parity among nations, to put an end to wasteful investments in destructive and devastating armaments and to free up our resources for more productive use by all our citizens.

On the other hand, however, we also see that these changes in the world have created substantial uncertainties and in many instances have given rise to extremely tragic regional, local, ethnic and religious conflicts which, unless addressed by the international community, will endanger world peace. These conflicts, combined with the continuing problems of poverty, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and the scourge of drug use and drug trafficking could offset the advantages we all hope to gain from the recent changes. Do we have the vision, the creativity and the resolve to ensure that the world takes positive advantage of the new realities for the benefit of all countries and peoples? Or will we continue to be myopic, dogmatically blind and self-centred, and risk losing this great opportunity?

The Afghan people have a special stake in the choice we collectively make. We wish to ensure that our choice is the right one and that all countries, including Afghanistan, share fully in the benefits that should flow from the new realities. Our special stake is based on our belief that the changes that have taken place in the world are partly the result of the enormous sacrifices made by our nation during the 14 years of struggle against Soviet occupation and communist rule.

In this context, I would like to say a few words about some of the issues confronting the world community today, issues which we must address in this Assembly. I will then discuss the situation in Afghanistan and state what our expectations are of the United Nations and the world community.

One of the issues confronting us is that of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country's situation is indeed tragic, and will be a test case to determine whether we in the international community have the sense of justice and can muster the resolve to end this tragedy successfully and justly. The continuing occupation of Bosnian Muslim territories by the Serbs, backed by the armed might of Serbia, the intransigence of the Serbians *vis-à-vis* the Security Council resolutions, and the untold atrocities committed against the innocent Bosnian Muslim population is not only an affront to this Organization but also an insult to humanity. The delegation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan believes that aggression must not be rewarded and that any territorial gains that were made as a result of force should and must be rectified. A definitive time limit should be set by which the Serbs should agree to the terms of the London Conference and withdraw from the seized territories. Otherwise, the current arms embargo against Bosnia should be lifted and other urgent and effective measures, including the use of force, should be considered by the United Nations and the international community to ensure that the Bosnian tragedy is ended and the Serbian aggression repulsed.

The Palestinian people have suffered long. The Islamic State of Afghanistan would like to see peace finally achieved for these people in a way that meets their national objectives and satisfies their right to self-determination. We believe that the declaration of principles on Palestinian self-rule signed in Washington on 13 September 1993 will serve as the basis for a long-term solution to the Palestine problem and ensure peace and stability only if it is followed by earnest negotiations that lead first, to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories; secondly, to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State that includes the Holy City of Jerusalem, one of the three most sacred cities of the Islamic world; thirdly, to the return of the Palestinian refugees; and fourthly, to a resolution of the problem of Israeli settlements in a manner acceptable to the new Palestinian State.

Kashmir is another tragic issue that requires urgent attention. This issue has not only caused substantial suffering to the people of Kashmir, but has become the source of friction between two important neighbouring States in South Asia and has prevented the full realization of the economic and trade potentials that exist within and outside the region. The Islamic State of Afghanistan therefore urges the resolution of this issue by these two States through negotiations under United Nations auspices or under any other arrangements that may be acceptable to

both sides, taking into account the wishes and aspirations of the people of Kashmir.

In the case of Somalia, the Islamic State of Afghanistan is distressed by the chaos which has resulted from increasing civil upheaval. We support the peace-keeping efforts of the United Nations and hope that international participation can ensure a safe end to the turmoil in Somalia and the establishment of a viable government to protect the interests and rights of the Somali people. We believe all peaceful avenues that might help in solving this problem should be explored.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan supports every equitable international effort to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, given that most of the tragedies around the world are caused by the massive increase in the availability of conventional weapons, my delegation would welcome and support a resolution to control the production and sale of such weapons. Such a resolution should also provide for effective arms collection programmes in countries which are saturated with weapons that are causing internal and regional instability.

Now I would like to focus the attention of the Assembly on my own country, Afghanistan. As all of you know, Afghanistan has suffered enormously within the past 15 years. I do not wish to go into the details of the destruction that has taken place, but I would like to highlight a few points very briefly.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has aptly summarized the tragedy of Afghanistan:

> "Few countries in history have suffered to the extent Afghanistan has over the past fourteen years. Aside from the physical destruction, which was often nothing short of cataclysmic, the results of the war include well over a million people killed, over 2 million disabled, nearly 6 million refugees in neighbouring countries, and 2 million internally displaced persons."

Almost the entire transportation, communication, and power infrastructure in Afghanistan has been either wiped out or severely damaged. The agricultural system is in total disarray, with the irrigation system destroyed, much livestock killed and the agricultural credit and extension services totally defunct. The placement of millions of mines throughout the country makes it impossible to revive the agricultural sector. Forests are denuded and the environment spoiled. Attempts to provide health care, medicine, immunization and so on are stymied by the destruction of so many hospitals and clinics. Mental health problems resulting from many years of war and bombings have no relief. In addition, thousands upon thousands of amputees require artificial limbs. Thousands of schools have been destroyed and many of our teachers and professors have been killed or exiled. Indeed, illiteracy has overtaken almost our entire population. A whole generation of Afghans has no experience of normal life or of education in any form.

The other two urgent problems we have are both linked to the lack of jobs and of economic alternatives within Afghanistan: the problem of large numbers of weapons in private hands and the problem of illicit drugs. I shall return to both of these matters a little later.

Let me describe the plight of one individual, Abdul Rahim. This man escaped to Pakistan from the war in Afghanistan nine years ago. He was newly married, with one baby, and during his years in Pakistan he had two more children. Two of his brothers were killed in battle, and the third died of disease that went untreated because of poor medical facilities. He is responsible for two of his widowed sisters-in-law and their five children. Thus, as he returns to his village in Afghanistan he is the head of a family of twelve. He finds that his parents, who had refused to leave, are no longer there. It will be some time before he learns of their fate. His home is reduced to a pile of rubble, as, obviously, are those of his neighbours. The shops of the village are gone. The once-paved road that came almost to the village is an unrecognizable path of dust and rocks. There is no water and no electricity. Worse, there are no trees or source of wood, and winter's shadow grows longer with each cold night. In his once productive fields lie burned tanks and odd pieces of metallic rubble. His cousins nervously talk of land mines, one of which killed an old neighbour the day before his return. His family is concerned about lack of flour, tea and sugar. This person is just an example; there are millions of people like him in Afghanistan.

One of the most damaging legacies that Afghanistan has inherited from Soviet occupation, Communist rule and the long, drawn-out war is a substantial break-up of our civil and military administration and the virtual collapse of our economic and financial institutions. In the past year the Government has taken substantial steps to correct the situation. Indeed, progress has been made in re-establishing central authority and in reviving public and private economic and financial institutions. None the less, considerable work and much assistance will be required before we begin to overcome those shortcomings.

In addition, given the destruction that has taken place, we are in need of a massive reconstruction programme which we are unable to undertake unless we are assisted by the international community. Last year the General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan. Not much has happened since then. A similar draft resolution will be presented to the Assembly this year, and we hope that it will be supported and that many can take part in putting it into effect.

When we raise the question of assistance for reconstruction and revitalization of the economy, our request is gently dismissed with the reply that once security is established, Afghanistan will be helped. While granting that security is important for a full-fledged reconstruction programme, I would suggest that a reasonable degree of peace and security does exist in large parts of Afghanistan. In these areas reconstruction is possible and, if started, could serve as a catalyst in revitalizing the entire Afghan economy. There are only a few areas where tensions exist and where there may be intermittent fighting. We should also bear in mind that it may not be possible to have full peace and security in the country unless we are able to start the process of reconstruction and provide people with productive economic opportunities to make it attractive, and indeed possible, for them to give up their arms. The vicious circle of security first and then reconstruction or economic revival first and then security must be broken if we are to make any progress.

Another dimension of security is obviously political. To ensure that the entire Afghan nation participates in determining the country's future political structure, we plan to hold elections in the course of the coming year. We have therefore requested the United Nations to help organize and supervise the election process.

Now I should like to come back to the two or three points which I mentioned earlier.

One issue worth mentioning here and which has had both regional and international implications is that of narcotic drugs. At the present time the illicit cultivation, production, stocking, smuggling of and trafficking in narcotic drugs are without a doubt critical problems that face humanity. Regrettably, one of the legacies of the long war is the transformation of some parts of our country into staging areas for illicit drug activity. This phenomenon, which is the result of the unavailability of economic alternatives, is a source of great pain to us. The Islamic State of Afghanistan, despite its scarce resources, has undertaken serious measures in the struggle against illicit drugs. We shall spare no efforts in combating these illegal activities. However, we must not overlook the reality that Afghanistan, with its extremely limited means and massive economic and financial needs, is not in a position to accomplish effectively this task on its own. Afghanistan needs urgent support from the international community to intensify the struggle against cultivation and of trafficking in drugs.

Another area where we require cooperation is that of land mines. Last year the Secretary-General's report brought to the attention of the world the fact that there are more than 10 million land mines in Afghanistan. It should also be mentioned that, on average, about 300 people fall victim to land mines each month. The agricultural sector, the traditional base of the Afghan economy, will never be revived until these mines are cleared. We of course express our gratitude for the past and ongoing mine-clearing programmes of the United Nations and experts from other countries. However, there is an urgent need for greater assistance by interested countries both in actual mine-clearing operations and in training Afghan citizens so as to enable us to complete this task in as short a time as possible. In this connection, the delegation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan wholeheartedly supports the new item, introduced by the European Community, on the current agenda of the General Assembly concerning mine-clearing programmes for war-stricken countries.

We Afghans want to reconstruct our country and to heal the wounds of the war that was imposed upon us. We look forward to a normal life in which all our citizens participate fully in the political, economic, and social life of the country, without any prejudice and without discrimination based on ethnicity, religious sect, language or gender. Here we consider it particularly important that Afghan women play an effective and positive role in the process of rebuilding Afghanistan. We want to raise the standard of living of our people. We want to live in peace with all our neighbours and to cooperate fully with them so that we can use the vast resources of our region to the maximum advantage of all our peoples. Indeed, we want to serve as a transit and trade route in our region. To this end, the Islamic State of Afghanistan intends to devise a reconstruction and development strategy that takes into account not only Afghanistan's own requirements, but also the requirements of the region.

We are of course distressed by the recent upheavals in Tajikistan. We have made every effort to ensure that tensions along the Tajik-Afghan border are reduced. For this purpose, official visits at the highest levels have been exchanged between the two countries. These visits have

resulted in mutual understanding on important issues. Appropriate communiqués to this effect have been issued in Kabul and Dushanbe. We welcome the decision of the Tajik authorities to solve their internal political problems through negotiations so that the Tajik refugees now in Afghanistan can return to Tajikistan voluntarily with confidence, in security and with honour, in accordance with international norms. To this end we are planning to reach a trilateral agreement between Afghanistan, Tajikistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan stands firm in support of human rights. This we consider not only an international commitment, but also a religious conviction. The fact that after the collapse of the communist regime in Afghanistan and the takeover by the Mujahideen, no policy of revenge against the former regime members was pursued is a good indication of this commitment. It is true, however, that due to the massive number of weapons now in private hands in our country some individual incidents of human rights violations have taken place, and skirmishes between different armed groups have regrettably led to the loss of innocent lives. Therefore, the Islamic State of Afghanistan is taking measures to collect heavy arms from various armed groups. We seriously hope that these efforts will bear fruit in the not too distant future.

I also want to make it clear that, having been the victims of terrorism ourselves, the Afghan nation opposes terrorism in any form or shape. We will never tolerate terrorism or allow Afghan territory to be used for such acts. Terrorism and the killing of innocent people is abhorrent to our religious beliefs and to our traditions. God Almighty condemns the killing of innocent people and says that when anyone kills an innocent person, it will

> "be as if He slew the whole people". (*The Holy Koran, V:35*).

The world is also witness to the fact that throughout the unequal war against the former Soviet Union the Afghans at no point carried out any acts of terrorism against Soviet citizens or Soviet property.

I would like to conclude by stating that the international community will draw maximum advantage from the changes that have taken place in the world if we assume responsibility for, and become committed to, working collectively towards improving the lives of all peoples, while each country maintains its full independence and enjoys equal rights and privileges as a separate nation. All countries represented in this body should be thinking not only of the prevention of conflicts, but also of engaging our energies to uplift the economic, social, and political lives of every nation and citizen so that all are safe, secure and free. It is with such vision, such commitment, such sense of sharing, that we will be able to realize the objectives for which this Organization was founded. For the attainment of these goals, we must ensure that new opportunities in the world are not wasted and that the sacrifices of millions of people who gave their lives for freedom and dignity, as well as the silent suffering of those who despaired under years of poverty and oppression, were not in vain.

For our part, I would like to assure the Organization and the international community that Afghanistan will be a full and cooperative partner in all constructive collective efforts aimed at ensuring international peace, stability, progress, freedom and justice.

May God bless everyone present and help us all in our efforts.

The meeting rose at 1:30 p.m.